1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1n,

Sociological Background

FORCED LABOR

466
[697] There are no big slave labor camps in the Estonian SSR, the reason for which is perhaps that public opinion is too much against the present regime and it is feared that the local inhabitants might co-operate with the slave laborers. All those inhabitants of the Estonian SSR whom the Soviet leaders wish to be rid of are either imprisoned in Estonia or, in the majority of cases, have been deported to remote arctic or semiarctic and isolated regions of Russia. One of these slave labor camps, where many Estonians have been held, is Vorkuta, but there are many others. The conditions of living and treatment in these camps are generally known as extremely harsh and the life expectancy of

466 slave laborers is therefore quite short.

One depressing firsthand account is included in Ants Oras' article, pp. 18-20,[2] as told by one young Estonian who managed to escape: "... we proceeded to Kirov. The journey lasted one week. Many of us collapsed and died in the wagons for lack of water and food. In Kirov we were taken to the local prison. There may have been between 1,500 and 2,000 of us... From the jail the arrested were gradually transferred to the camps, having to cover hundreds of kilometers on foot. Many of them failed to survive the strain--they fainted and collapsed. As a rule they were not transported but were shot there and then... When we arrived, a pole was struck into the ground and we were told: 'Now you can live here.' First of all we had to make dugouts for ourselves but the ground was

[1] [See pp. 278 -- Analyst]

frozen and work terribly hard. The guards had a canvas tent which was covered with moss and snow. We built a house for the guards.... We had to sleep in the mud of our dugouts. In the morning we were glued to the frozen ground. Men died like flies but new prisoners were brought to replace them." He went on to say that the convicts had to work twelve hours a day in the winter and fourteen hours in the summer. There was a complicated "soup kettle" system, consisting of ten different degrees of food rations. Most of those able to work were fed under category 4 or 5, 400-700 grams of rye bread and half a litre of soup daily. Only cases of grave bodily injury or very serious illness were eligible for treatment in the hospital, where the treatment was so inadequate that the patients often died, frequently after shots.

1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

466 In the majority of cases, whole families are deported but their destination is not the same. Families thus are separated and lost to each other often for a lifetime.

000 During the German Occupation, 1941-44, the Nazi officials kept concentration camps in Estonia and several years after World War II the Communists had their concentration camps for German prisoners of war, who now, however, have been released.

SOURCE

113 Oras, Ants

1947. Deportations in Estonia. The Baltic Review, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 18-25.

I:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1o,

Sociological Background

LABOR RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

466 [468] During Estonian independence relations between employer and employee were on the whole peaceful, and no large-scale strikes occurred. Although salaries were low, the cost of living was correspondingly low. The chief sources of friction were wages and working conditions. On the whole, the ministry of Labor and Welfare did a great deal to improve working conditions, passing several labor laws aimed at the protection of the workers, and sending Labor Inspectors to the various industries to see that the laws were carried out.

467 There were no trade unions in czarist Russia, so that Estonia in the independence period lacked experience in handling them, and the Communists,

I:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

665 last years of independence, through the Chamber of Workers.

461 In Soviet-occupied Estonia, as in the entire
466 Soviet Union, the employer is the State. It is a severe employer who does not permit any strikes. According to many sources, absenteeism and tardiness are very severely punished. If the worker or other employee is absent for the first time or is late for more than twenty minutes without valid reason, he may be sentenced to several months of correctional labor, which means harder work and a 25 per cent reduction in wages. If a worker is repeatedly absent, he is sentenced to jail or deported to a concentration camp. Workers are responsible for the tools with which they work, and must pay a penalty five times the value of the tool if it is destroyed. No one can leave his working place and

461 seek employment elsewhere without permission
466 of the director of the factory, and if he tries,
[462] the worker may be imprisoned. Women and young people are not safeguarded by law from heavy work. Women work in oil-shale mines and other heavy industries on both day and night shifts.

467 There are trade unions in Soviet Estonia and each worker must contribute one per cent of his wages to his union. But union duties are reversed as compared to the trade unions of the Western world; they protect the interests of the government, organize Socialist competitions in raising the productivity of labor, try to reduce costs of production, exercise economy of raw materials, and so on. Communist ideology explains that in a Socialist society exploitation no longer exists; therefore there is no need

1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

362 have reported, there has been very little build-
727 ing activity during the Second Soviet Occupation, and at the present time there is a serious housing crisis in Estonian cities.

565 Class distinctions were not sharp in independ-
162 ent Estonia; there were neither great industrial magnates nor a pauperized proletariat, although previously there had been great landowners and landless tenants in rural Estonia. In 1934, only 4.9 per cent of the population lived on capital, while the rest made a living at various types of work; 36 per cent were wage-earners, while 64 per cent were self-employed and independent.

[674] Estonia, a land of few big cities and therefore
[735] of few slums, had a low rate of crime, juvenile delinquency, begging and vagabondage.

466 From the beginning of independence, Estonian social policy had a sound foundation; its aims

1;Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

●466 were to contribute to the social well-being of the whole nation, and to protect especially those workers and employees who were economically dependent on other groups. There was a maximum eight-hour work day (for youth, 6.5 hours) in all industries, mines, and in transport and commercial enterprises in the towns. In the country the work-day was nine hours. In offices the working period was seven hours daily and forty-one hours a week. All overtime work was counted as time and a half. Night work was forbidden for women and young people, and for men

464] in the baking industry. Young people under fourteen years of age were forbidden to work in factories, mines, or construction and transport enterprises. In agricultural work the minimum age was twelve years, although shepherds and cattleherds could begin work at ten years.

1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

466 Heavy physical labor or work injurious to health was forbidden for women and children. Working conditions were improved with regulations on working conditions and safety.

[445] The Ministry of Social Welfare supervised the observance of all laws[1] through the State Labor Inspectors, who also were on the lookout for possibilities of further improvements.

745 Social insurance was tremendously extended during the years of independence. Victims of on-the-job accidents received free medical care and artificial limbs, if needed, and in the case of disablement, two-thirds of their wages. In case of permanent disablement, a pension was paid, and in the case of death, the family received funeral subsidies and a pension. Work-accident expenses were all paid by the employer. The farm workers were also insured against

[1] [See cat. 116, pp. 300-2 -302- --Analyst]

511 standard of living. There are today insufficient food rations again and the people have to spend their small incomes for buying high-priced black market goods. Although clothing is not rationed, it is extremely scarce and very expensive.

466 Working conditions in Estonia today are the same as elsewhere in the Soviet Union. The Labor Law does not protect the worker and the workers are, as a result, being considerably exploited. The work days are longer and there are many kinds of "voluntary" work to be performed after the day's work. The women and the youth are not protected by law from heavy and dangerous work. (For more details see Subparagraph 1m, LABOR FORCE)[1]

[1] [See cat. 116, pp 256-274 -- Analyst]

[Estonian constitution as of November, 1947] 13

641 The right to work is ensured by the socialist organization
661 of the national economy, the steady growth of the productive forces of Soviet society, the elimination of the possibility of economic crises and the abolition of unemployment.

Art. 91. The citizens of the Estonian SSR have the right to rest and leisure.

[966] The right to rest and leisure is secured by the establishment of an eight-hour day for the overwhelming majority of workers, by the institution of annual vacations with full pay for factory and office workers, and by the provision of a wide network of sanatoria, rest homes and clubs for the accommodation of working people.

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[657] Art. 92. Citizens of the Estonian SSR have the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or disability.

This right is ensured by the extensive development of social insurance of factory and office workers at state expense, free medical service for working people, and the provision of a wide network of health resorts for the use of the working people.

[871] Art. 93. Citizens of the Estonian SSR have the right to education.

This right is ensured by universal and compulsory elementary education; by free education up to and including higher education; by a system of state stipends for the overwhelming majority of students of higher educational institutions; by instruction in schools being conducted in the native language, and by the organization in the factories, state farms, and machine and tractor stations of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the working people.

[562] Art. 94. Women in the Estonian SSR are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity.

The possibility of exercising these rights is ensured by women being accorded an equal right with men to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, by state protection of the interests of mother and child, maternity leave with full pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens.

[563] Art. 95. Equality of rights of citizens of the Estonian SSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity, is an indefeasible law.

Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of any direct or indirect privileges for, citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law.

[659] Art. 96. In order to ensure the citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the Estonian SSR is separated from the state, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens.